THE LIBRARY AND ITS ADMINISTRATION.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT WORCESTER, MASS.

PAMPHLET A.

Approved by

The State Board of Publication.

CORNER OF MAIN HALL, SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF BOOKCASES FOR READY REFERENCE.

REFERENCE BOOKS, CARD CATALOGUES, AND WRITING-TABLE.

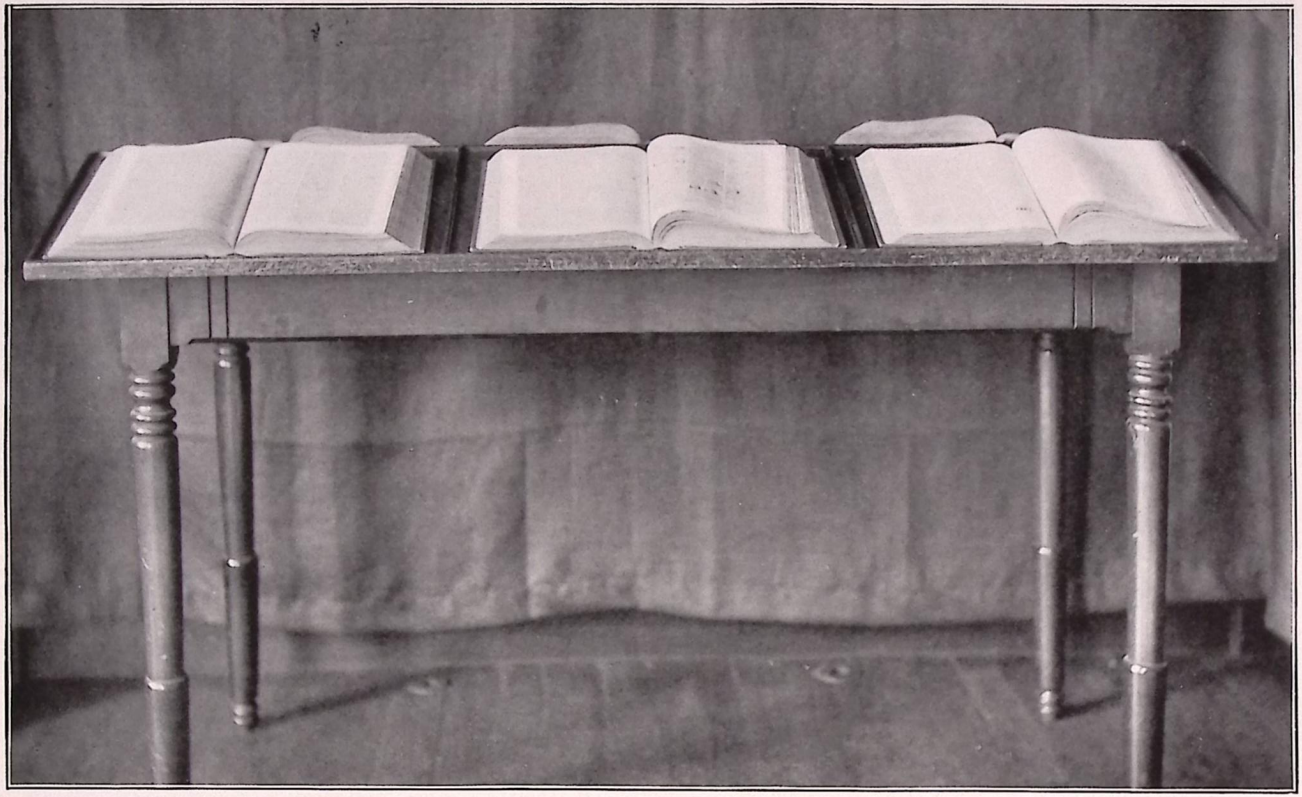


TABLE FOR CENTURY DICTIONARY.

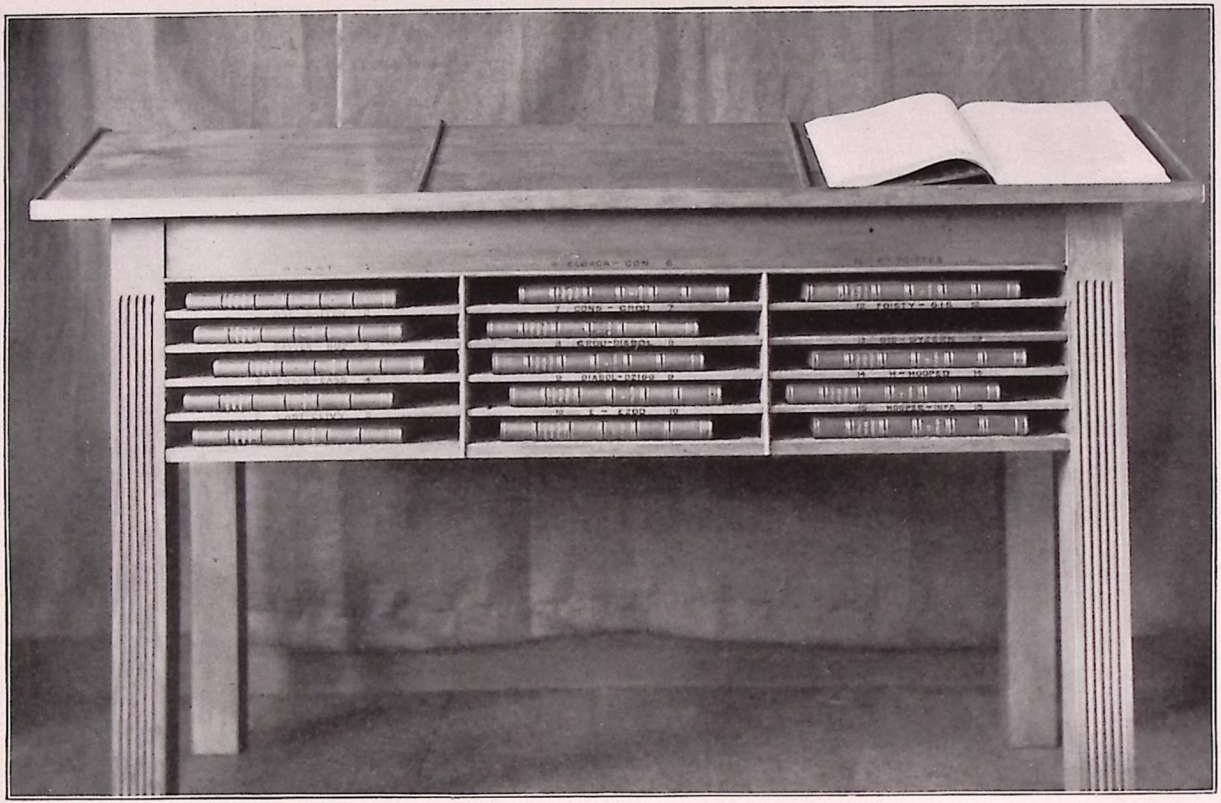
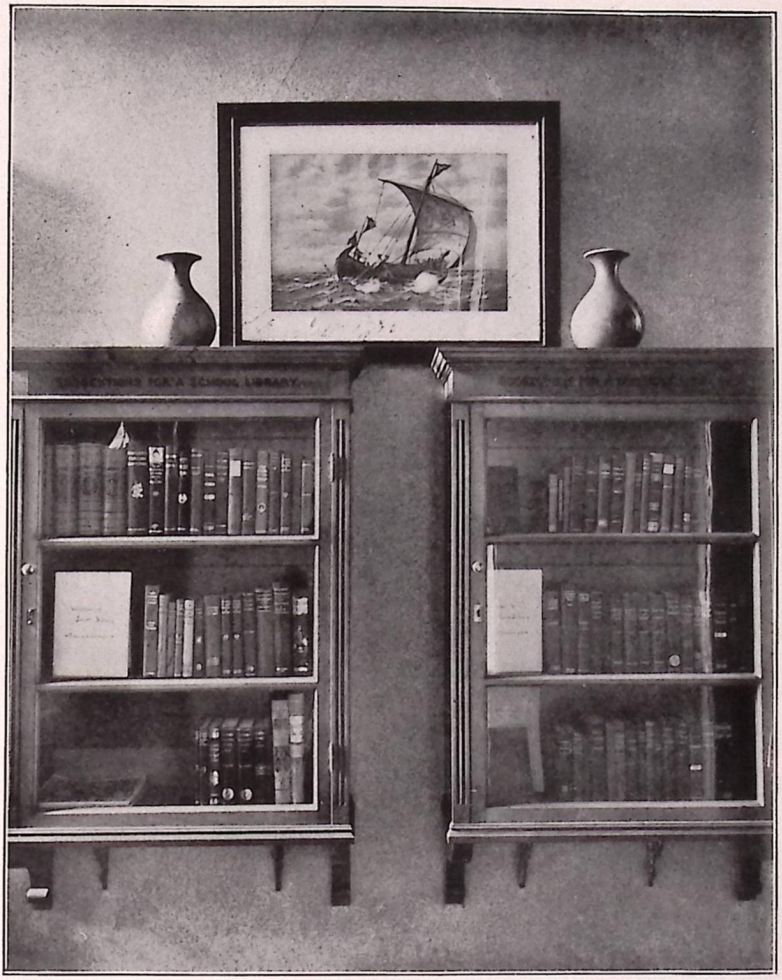


TABLE FOR MURRAY'S OXFORD DICTIONARY.



SUGGESTIVE CASES OF BOOKS FOR SMALL LIBRARIES.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.

PAMPHLET A.

THE LIBRARY AND ITS ADMINISTRATION.

A library of almost fourteen thousand volumes has been accumulated since the opening of the school in 1874, and additions to it are constantly being made. No special rooms are devoted to the books; they are distributed throughout the building in such a way as to make them most accessible to students and teachers (see "wing-frame" 3). They are contained in thirty bookcases which are entirely open at all times, and effort is made to have the books used as freely and generally as is consistent with proper care and oversight.

While the books are chosen for their excellence, they are adapted to the class of readers for which they are designed; and the appearance of the collection indicates that the use of it is in large measure general as well as constant. The supply of dictionaries, encyclopædias and reference books of all kinds is unusually liberal, as will appear from the fact that three copies of the Century Dictionary are in constant use and that all the numbers of Murray's Oxford Dictionary so far as issued have been bound and placed before the students (see models, and "wing-frames" 2 and 3). The best children's books, including collections of fables and fairy tales are supplied, and these are much used by those students who are acting as "apprentices" in the lower grades of schools. The library is rich in the subjects of botany, natural history, anthropology, and folk-lore. Such authors as Thoreau, Jefferies, Abbott, Burroughs, Torrey, and Bolles, are bought and replaced more frequently, perhaps, than any other class. Volumes of poetry, travel, biography, essays, and novels are always in use, the proportionate supply

of each being roughly indicated by the order in which they are named. There is no official librarian, but the necessary care has been distributed among pupils and teachers in such a way as not to be burdensome to any one. One teacher puts labels into the books, numbers them, and places them on the shelves. She also has charge of the Card Catalogue. Another labels and puts in place the various magazines and periodicals and keeps their record; while a third teacher by frequent inspection of the shelves makes sure that the pupils are not remiss in the work assigned them. To each pupil two or more shelves are assigned, for the care of which she is responsible, so that all the students are really librarians (see specimen book-shelf in cabinet). Blank forms of stiff paper of uniform size are furnished, one for each shelf, on which is written a list of the books belonging to that shelf. In this list are entered, first, the number showing the position of the book on the shelf; second, the accessions-number; third, the title and the author. This Shelf Catalogue, as it is called, stands among the books on the shelf and always shows exactly what books should be found there and the order in which they should stand. Every book bears a label on the inside of the cover, on which is written in ink the accessions-number and the date of purchase. In addition is put in, in pencil, a threefold entry: The letter indicating the bookcase where the book belongs (all our cases are lettered); the figure which tells the number of the shelf in that case (all the shelves are numbered); and the figure showing the position of the book on that shelf. For example, X–7–10. This makes it possible to tell instantly where a stray book belongs; the mark is written in pencil so that any time the book may be moved from one place to another if thought best by the teacher in charge. On the back of each book is pasted a small label (differing in form for the different cases) that bears the shelf number of the book; so that the shelf librarian by running her eye along the back of the books on her shelf can see instantly if a book is missing. After considerable experiment in methods of charging books borrowed, the following system

has been worked out: At the side of each bookcase throughout the building hangs a cardboard "pocket" containing a supply of "Borrowed Book" slips like this:

BORROWED BOOK.

[STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, WORCESTER.]

Borrower .....

When borrowed .....

To be returned .....

No. ....., Case ....., Shelf ....., Shelf No. .....

Title .....

Each person borrowing a book fills out this form and hangs the slip on a hook at the side of the shelf from which she takes the book. This slip must be shown to some teacher, or if no teacher can be found at the time, to a fellow-pupil, who verifies it and endorses it with his initials in the corner. When the book is brought back it is first shown, together with the slip, to some teacher, then put back into its place, after which the slip is destroyed. When a pupil-librarian inspects her shelf and finds books missing from it, she refers to the slips hanging on the hook, which ought to account for all absent volumes; if there are books missing not thus accounted for, she reports such to the teacher in charge. If a slip is found past the date of returning the book, such a slip is added to a collection of "overdue slips" kept in a public place where they may be seen by all; if the slip is not there seen and attended to by the borrower of the book, she will in time be reminded by the teacher in charge that it needs her attention.

TEXT-BOOKS. — For the care of our large text-book library a different system is adopted. In every class a detail of three members, chosen as far as possible for their executive ability, is appointed at the beginning of the term by the Faculty to act as Librarians for their class. Record books are furnished them, in which they enter the names of the class members and record the numbers of all books

distributed in the classes. This record is made as soon as the books are distributed, and at the end of the term the books are collected and discharged in class, each member being held responsible for all the books charged to her.

Apprentice Library. — For the use of classes serving as apprentices in the public schools a portion of our library is reserved. These books are duplicate copies of some in the general library, are distinguished from them by labels of a different color, and the slip used in borrowing them is also of a different color.

The books in the Apprentices' Library are such as are found most useful as supplementary to reading, geography and history lessons; and in many cases several copies of each are furnished. But the apprentices are not confined to the use of these books alone; they have the same access to the general library that the other classes enjoy.

New-book Table. — Before new books are given their permanent place on our shelves, they are exhibited for a few days, or perhaps a few weeks, on a special table known as the New-Book Table, which is placed where it can be seen by all. The length of time they are thus shown is fixed by the frequency of purchase of new books, which varies a good deal; when they are being added rapidly to the library the time of display for each is necessarily shortened. The accommodations of the table being limited, the books that have been there longest must be taken away to make room for the new arrivals. But when, for any reason, fewer books are being bought than usual, each will stay the longer on the New-Book Table. This gives all books a sort of introduction to pupils, though nobody is required to give any attention to this display. As a matter of fact, however, the table is an object of constant interest to our students, who by occasional reference to it get a pretty good notion of the additions to the library.

Special Collections. — Near the entrance to the main hall of the school are placed two small bookcases, labelled, respectively, "Suggestions for a School Library," and "Suggestions for a Teacher's Library (see 'wing-frame' 1)." The books in these cases are not used by the school; in fact they are the only books in the entire collection that

are kept locked up. But the cases have glass doors and the titles and the authors of the volumes can be plainly seen. Neither case is full. Plenty of space remains in each for future additions; but each has a representative collection of what, in the opinion of the school authorities, are among the best books for the teacher and for the school. They are intended to serve as suggestions to our students in these two lines; and it is very common to find students of the senior class, notebook in hand, making lists of these books for future use.

Summer Lending. — At the close of the school year in June each pupil is allowed to take three books from our reference library, in addition to any text-books she may want for summer use. These books are charged in the usual way; but since the organization of the school is then broken up, the slips are taken charge of by the Faculty, to be redeemed at the beginning of the school year in September. Our graduates are also allowed to borrow from the library, when such borrowing does not interfere with the needs of the undergraduates.

The almost unrestricted use of the library, as here described, results, of course, in occasional loss of books, there being each year a few volumes that cannot be accounted for; but we believe this loss to be very small, comparatively speaking, considering the important advantages derived from our liberal system of administration.

Reference is made to the sample shelf of books accompanying this monograph, to the models of dictionary-tables elsewhere exhibited, to the illustrative photographs shown on the "wing-frames" in the cabinet and reproduce in the accompanying cuts.